

Title:

The FLUKE Mini-Comics & Zine Festival Archive: Stewarding 20+ Years of Jamming Econo, Community Collaboration, And Creative Print Culture in Athens, Georgia

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Abstract:

The FLUKE Mini-Comics & Zine Festival, the brainchild of cartoonist T. Edward Bak (1970-), has evolved into a cornerstone of Athens' alternative comix scene. Co-organized since 2002 by cartoonist Patrick Dean (1976-2021), Robert Newsome (1974-), and local small press devotees who have gathered regularly at Bizarro-Wuxtry (the Southeastern epicenter of alternative comix, zine, and small press creators managed by Devlin Thompson (1968-)), it offers a grassroots platform for indie creators while eschewing the commercial trappings of mainstream conventions. With affordable attendee/exhibitor fees and a community-driven ethos, FLUKE fosters a culture of inclusivity and support for Athens artists and small creator-driven businesses. Its collaboration with the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia honors the festival's history and role in the Athens community and its print culture. Librarians Kathryn Manis and Mandy Mastrovita have worked with festival director Robert Newsome to ensure this partnership encompasses outreach, education, and cultural exchange as part of its dynamic model of community-institutional collaboration.

Keywords:

zines, mini comix, book arts, community archives, DIY, zine festivals, grassroots movements, library partnerships, preservation, Athens Georgia, #Zines, #Minicomix, #BookArts, #CommunityArchives, #DIY, #ZineFestivals, #GrassrootsMovements, #LibraryPartnerships, #Archives #Preservation, #AthensGeorgia #Fluxus #RiotGrrrl #WeJamEcono

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Fig. 1. Mastrovita, M. (2024). *FLUKE 2024*, March 30 at the 40 Watt Club in Athens, Georgia. Photograph. [CC0 1.0 Universal](#). This work has been marked as public domain.

Introduction:

One of the early criticisms of FLUKE was that it's a "glorified 'zine swap.'" I think this came from a person who was used to tabling at larger conventions and craft fairs. We've never publicly identified the person who wrote this because we don't want to shame them, but we took that criticism and made it sort of an unofficial motto because that's the best description of what we want FLUKE to be.

–Robert Newsome, FLUKE Mini-Comics and Zine Festival director and co-founder.

This paper is a bit of an exploration and a case study that uses the FLUKE Oral History Project and Archive as a model for zine-based archives, or archives for local creative communities where we explore FLUKE's history, community impact, and investigates the challenges and opportunities of establishing the collection, a community-based zine archive collection in Athens, Georgia built around the FLUKE Mini-Comics festival, held annually since 2002.

Collections like the FLUKE Oral History Project and Archive require some cultural "unpacking:" zines, minicomix, and book arts represent a significant and diverse mode of art production at the intersections of community, countercultural impulse, and DIY ethos. Yet, they are underrepresented in archives, academic scholarship, and discussions about art and cultural traditions. The FLUKE Mini-Comics & Zine Festival, held annually in Athens, Georgia since 2002, represents more than just a gathering of creators and enthusiasts; it embodies the Minutemen's spirit of "jamming econo" – keeping a tight budget, and fostering community through collaboration and a shared passion for print culture.

In 2023, a grant awarded by the University of Georgia's Institute for Women's Studies Women and Girls in Georgia Conference provided seed money for the establishment of the FLUKE Oral History Project and Archive, which has allowed us to engage, plan events, and interact with a thriving part of the Athens creative "scene" and given us this

opportunity to embed ourselves (as community members and the stewards of these materials) inside of the processes we would need to establish with other community archives groups (as librarians) with regards to documentation, data collection, and communication.

Our work thus far:

- Defining a "scene:" A "scene" is a local group/subculture that shares the same values and philosophies. A scene can range in size from a few people in a small town to thousands in a big city. Punk/alternative scenes are often supported by DIY small businesses: record labels, presses, performances, or venues.
- How a town or city's independent/unaffiliated creative communities build a sustainable "scene" that has grown to represent eclectic, organic, and diverse groups of voices that support intersectionality and affirmation.
- the challenges faced by GLAM entities, in interpreting the cultural significance of zines in capturing individual creative expression in graphic visual and/or narrative form.
- How libraries, archives, and creative communities can find ways to collaborate and support the contextualization and preservation of zines, mini-comix, and local creative print culture so that they are retained and remain accessible as part of our cultural record.

"This is how a scene is made that can last decades:" Defining a scene

Understanding the significance of FLUKE requires a deep dive into what constitutes a "scene" in the context of punk and alternative cultures.

Kristine Anstine has passionately connected museums, galleries, bookstores, creators, and real people with art-based books, zines, and publications (including the recent Brooklyn Art Museum zine show "[Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines](#)") from highbrow to low for nearly 30 years. She is a key figure in shaping the evolution of underground comix culture as it has grown from its head shop roots into new creative and cultural alignments with art books, artists' books, zines, DIY culture, gender, self-care, and social justice. Now the major account sales manager at Microcosm Publishing, Kristine worked in the Bay Area with Ron Turner at San Francisco's countercultural book publisher Last Gasp, and Rory Root at Comic Relief, where she managed both the Berkeley and the San Francisco shops. Here, she describes the influence of community-minded creators like Devlin Thompson and Robert Newsome.

Every small press or regional art scene needs a person (preferably several) who works as a supporter and has created a third place to foster a movement larger than its disparate parts. These are the people who have plenty of day-to-day work yet find time to introduce artists to each other, to gallery owners, and to their fans. They make weird stickers and mini-comics and band fliers for fun. They create communities that put together/assist at small press festivals, like Athens' own FLUKE. They do a thousand mundane things that result in art and stories being put in front of the people that might appreciate it. Each of these people have strong artistic preferences and interests of their own, yet they are able to see value in art that is not personally to their tastes. This is how a scene is made that can last decades. Enjoy it while you still can, Athens!

--Kristine Anstine, Microcosm Press

FLUKE's Background and Its Community Collaborators

In FLUKE's early years, the scene was far less accommodating for creators than it is now. In 2001/2002, there were no Etsy (2005), Instagram (2010), or simple plug-and-play online venues to sell work, and (modern) craft fair shows and networks were just becoming established.

Galleries and publishers were still gatekeepers, and these conventions/festivals were the only way for these print creators to gather and interact with interested people.

Early FLUKE was as heavily influenced by the national and international book arts scene/s as it was by zines and comix. After receiving her MFA in printmaking/ book arts from UGA in 2001, FLUKE co-founder Mandy Mastrovita served as the associate director of Nexus Press (2001-2003), a book arts press facility that produced experimental photolithographic artists' books from 1977-2003.

At the Cortona International Symposium: A Print Odyssey 2001 Cortona, Italy Mastrovita served on a panel and represented her work *Off-Register: The Sound of Print*, which she curated, produced, designed, shot the plates for the sleeve, and printed at Nexus Press/United Record Pressing.

Thompson, Mastrovita, and Newsome met and/or interacted with Japanese artist Shinro Ohtake (who published with Nexus Press, and visited the University of Georgia in 2001. Mastrovita and Newsome hung out with Kengo Hiyoki (Peelander Yellow), who came to Athens to perform in his band Peelander-Z at our studio (Fort Awesome) We traded old manga, zines, and art books for prints. The work of these Japanese artists pollinated our scene with dynamic ideas.



Fig. 2. Page spread from (ATLanta 1945 +50) by Shinro Ohtake (top), and untitled silkscreen illustrated and printed by Kengo Hiyoki (bottom)

The Canadian art venture Projet Mobilivre/Bookmobile Project, an Airstream Bambi bookmobile outfitted with zines and artists' books also toured through Georgia twice in 2001 and 2002, providing even more exposure to international zines and books.

Devlin Thompson's 2002 event poster is available [here](#).

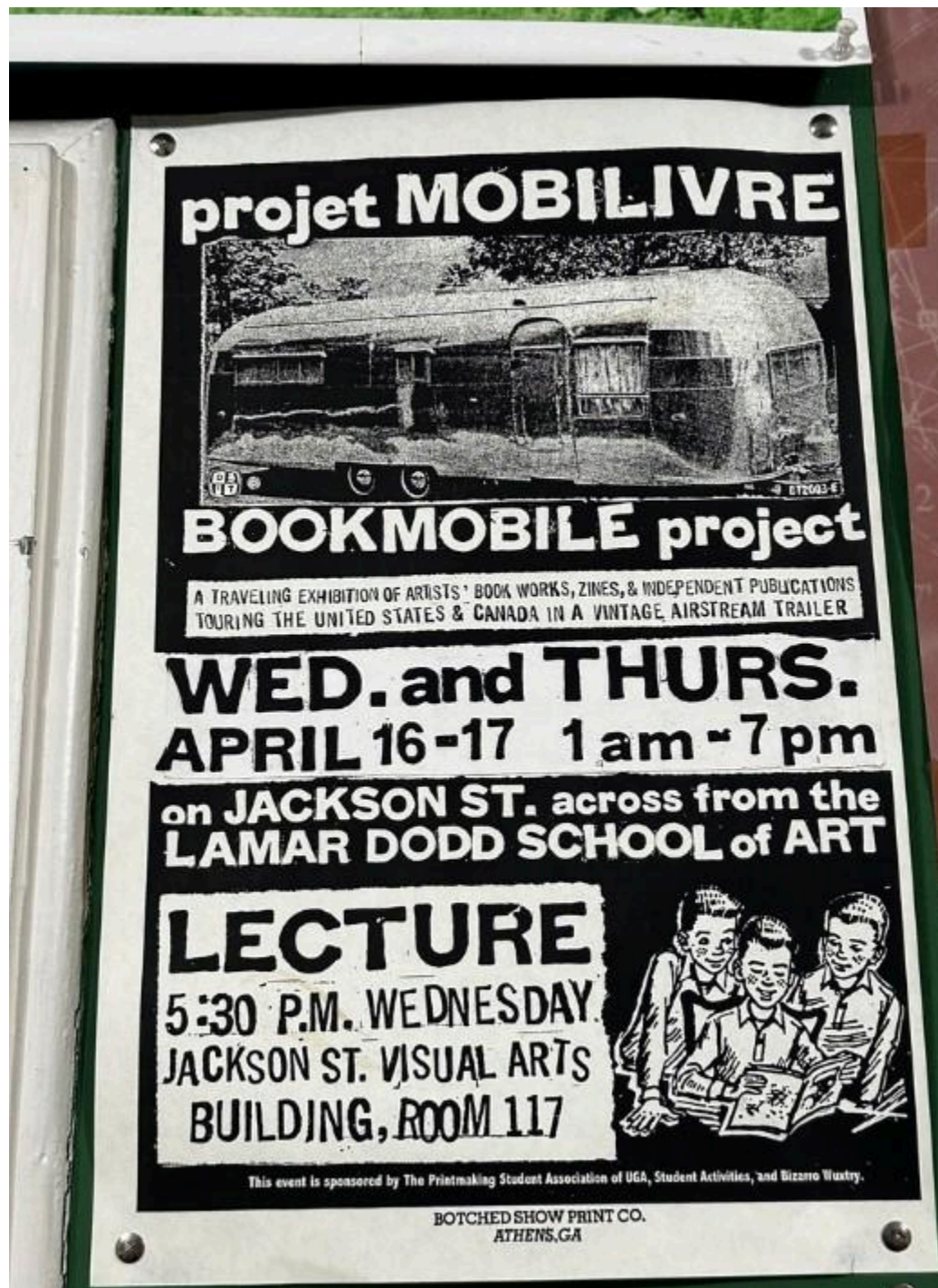


Fig. 3. Projet Mobilivre flier designed and printed by Devlin Thompson, 2002.



Fig. 4. Mastrovita and Newsome in the *Journal of Artist's Books* #16, 2001.

Although the connection between artist's books, zines, and comics grew separately and together organically, zine creator Robert Newsome (1974-) and illustrator and comic creator Patrick Dean (1976-2021) absorbed the festival after its first year and served as

organizers until Dean's death in 2021. Newsome continues to run the festival with help from FLUKE volunteers. Their efforts have sustained and grown the festival over the years. Newsome is a 1996 graduate of UGA's Women's Studies program and has centered inclusivity and intersectionality with FLUKE since its inception.

FLUKE maintains a smaller, more focused environment than larger comic conventions, emphasizing work and ideas over merchandising. Admission is \$2 for visitors, and that has always come with a pinback button designed and manufactured locally specifically for the event, a large square button for the vendors, and small round buttons for attendees. Newsome and Thompson print, punch and assemble all the buttons (usually with help from other volunteers) each year.

All FLUKE events have been held along with Bizarro-Wuxtry's Devlin Thompson (1968-). In Athens, [Devlin Thompson](#) of [Bizarro-Wuxtry](#) has been instrumental in shaping the local minicomic scene, providing a platform for zine and minicomic creators to share their work, fostering connections between artists, and encouraging their creative and intellectual growth. Bizarro-Wuxtry serves as a hub where artists can find, sell, and share their creations.

Patrick and I never really had any deep discussions with Bak about the “philosophy” behind FLUKE, it was just a thing we had a lot of fun with the first time it happened and we both thought it should continue for a few more years.

Looking back, two decades later, it sort of comes into focus that maybe that is the “philosophy.” The only thing we’ve really ever tried to do with FLUKE is provide a

space for all of these people making this sort of art to get together and look at what's going on.

One thing Patrick and I were always serious about is making sure nobody made money off of FLUKE. We charge enough for the exhibitor spaces to cover what we spend renting the actual tables, and we charge enough at the door to cover the cost of using the space.

It's a delicate balance, and we realize that, but neither of us ever wanted to see FLUKE become a source of income for anyone.

This isn't meant as us telling other people how to run other shows. Money is a reality and you have to make sure the financial side is taken care of, but FLUKE has been incredibly lucky to find a way to do what we do at a low cost.

This allows us to focus on the community.

Patrick and I both made/make comics and 'zines and other stuff, so we're a part of the community in that way, but our larger role with FLUKE is to provide a space and to try to do that in the most equitable and accessible way possible.

--Robert Newsome, FLUKE Festival director and co-founder

Table 1: FLUKE's Impact on Athens Print Culture through 2024

Most statistics have been kept since 2013, some go back to 2002.

Printed FLUKE Anthologies from 2002-2025: **5**

Sponsors: **16**

Artists/Publishers/Creators: **380**

Playlists (since 2016) **7** number of playlists, **1099** curated songs in playlists

Posters since 2002: **21**

Buttons since 2002: **21** (regular, visitor) **TBD** (square, vendor)

New artists represented by Bizarro-Wuxtry from 2002-2024: **ca. 600**

New titles represented by Bizarro-Wuxtry from 2002-2024: **ca. 1200**

In tandem with each FLUKE event, Bizarro-Wuxtry has taken on consignment and sold hundreds of zines belonging to these FLUKE creators (whether they have tabled at FLUKE or not), and found new audiences for their work.

"[From FLUKE]...we tend to take in work from at least thirty artists a year, for a total average of maybe sixty titles each time. And on those [FLUKE Festival] days, the store accepts pretty much anything offered, from mini-comics to photo zines to patches/stickers/handcrafted objects, though our orientation is toward narrative comics."

–Devlin Thompson, manager of Bizarro-Wuxtry and co-founder of FLUKE festival

Oral histories + FLUKE Festival Intersectionality: the catalyst for the collection

In 2023, Dr. Kathryn Manis wrote (and received!) a grant from the Institute for Women's Studies at the University of Georgia to record a seed/pilot set of oral history interviews conducted with the biennial Women and Girls in Georgia Conference to establish the FLUKE Oral History Archives. This demonstrates a commitment to preserving not only the physical zines but also the oral histories and narratives of their creators and the community surrounding the festival.

FLUKE and Bizarro-Wuxtry have been incubators and champions of Athens print culture that have unified a diverse community and scene within the traditionally white

male-dominated scope of comics shops and conventions. But they have also been the creative homes of nationally-recognized women cartoonists like [Eleanor Davis](#), who began attending FLUKE as a student at the Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD)'s sequential art program, now a resident of Athens, children's book author-illustrator [Emily Winfield Martin](#) (now based in Portland Oregon), and [Abby Kacen](#) (now based in Cincinnati, Ohio).

Zines in Athens, Georgia: A Hub for Counter-cultural Narratives

In chapter two of "Cool Town," Grace Elizabeth Hale documents how art movements like Fluxus, rooted in print culture, and punk-inspired print publications impacted Athens' seminal new music band Pylon, and the connection to the community of students and faculty at UGA's Lamar Dodd School of Art, when it was located adjacent to downtown Athens:

[Michael] Lachowski and [Randy] Bewley fell hard for the new music...But what really got them excited was a fanzine that began appearing in 1976, the *New York Rocker*. It did not look like much, a cheap tabloid sitting in small stacks on the counter or a rack in the record stores. Repeated thumbings smudged the pictures and print and softened the pages. Inside, however, was a whole new world...

Collectively, the band members launched a story about musical amateurism, the importance of pleasure, and the elevation of art—formal originality as well as self-expression—over commerce. These ideas shaped how the people creating the scene understood themselves as different from other Americans.

--Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Cool Town*, p. 8.

But there is so much more print culture in this town that has co-existed together and separately from Athens' music scene, the collaborations between the University of

Georgia's art school students, and the town's unaffiliated and unfettered creators. This fertile ground of artistic spirit and political activism has nurtured a thriving community of zine creators and independent publishers, producing a wealth of self-published works documenting the experiences of diverse voices often marginalized in mainstream media. These zines offer a unique window into the hyperlocal social and cultural fabric of Athens that aligns with a punk/DIY/amateur ethos globally.

Zine Stewardship and the Role of Libraries

Applying hard, fast rules to zine definition may lead to a failure by libraries to acquire important materials that fit neither the definition of art zine nor artist's book. If the zine maker is well known, like Tom Sachs, the zine may be recognized as valuable and be classed as an artist's book even if the artist calls it a zine. In addition, inexpensive but valuable publications may be ignored by librarians who may be looking for fine press artists' books, which tend to be costly and acquired through established sellers.

(-- Susan E. Thomas, "Value and Validity of Art Zines as an Art Form")

Zine stewardship encompasses the intentional collection, preservation, and provision of access to zines, ensuring their long-term availability for research and community engagement. Custodians of these complex contextual and creative objects face unique challenges in collecting and preserving zines due to their unconventional formats, fragile materials, and limited acquisition channels.

Genres: Scene cross-pollinations and textual communities

It is important to distinguish that there are both "fine art"/elite and "DIY"/accessible trajectories for these printed works to land: newsletters and zines have grown from exchange networks that have varied from head shops, art galleries, punk shows, and the

US Postal Service--each method of distribution is significant to the dissemination of these creative works to their desired communities.

Members of FLUKE's community of creators are learned in most, if not all of these genres, even if they don't subscribe to their definitions, and one is likely to encounter them all at a FLUKE festival, and certainly along the shelves of Bizarro-Wuxtry.

This is as good a place as any to position a micro-glossary of genre terms that will hopefully clarify some of the content around the current "underground publishing" scene, where one is likely to encounter the following terminology.

A caveat is that out in the wild, in the community, there are evolving discussions about this living, practiced, and complicated art form with many different communities of contributors who self-define, and who may wear more than one hat, e.g, many "mini-comic artists" are also "graphic novelists." There are also works of the same genre that may or may not be produced professionally.

Table 2: Mini-glossary of terms

"Alternative" comix/comics Comics, inspired by the underground comics of the 1960s and 1970s, that began to appear in periodicals such as *RAW*, from the 1980s- forward, generally for more mature audiences, often with smaller print runs that employ more

printing customizations. Alternative comix were distributed and sold within the "direct market" (the hobbled framework of publishers, distributors, and sellers of comic books to American retailers that has existed for decades) OUTSIDE of superhero comics and comics collecting.

Artists' books - Artists' books can be atelier-style press books, livres d'artistes, or works that center the creation of an expensively-crafted "book object." They can also be formed in the romantic vision of the "democratic multiple" still held by many printmakers, even if bogus. Unquestionably, the conflation of book crafts, artists' books, book objects, connoisseurship, and even digital publishing have added further wrinkles to the broad interpretation of this genre. (Janet Zweig)

Comics - sequence of illustrations containing a story or stories, often serialized as "comic strips" in newspapers with bylines, or published in booklet form under a running title, whose stories can continue over months and sometimes years.

Comix - Intentional "co-mixing" of art/text/storytelling, and the juxtaposition of print/text/graphic techniques to maximize the impact of their message, a postmodern representation of traditional comic book elements. Coined by Françoise Mouly (art director of the *New Yorker* for 30+ years) and Art Spiegelman (Pulitzer-Prize winner and creator of *Maus*), the dynamic duo and publishing engine behind *RAW* magazine (1980-1991) and *RAW Books*.

Fanzines - "Amateur" zines with roots in the science fiction and comic book fan communities that flourished in the mid-20th century.

Graphic novels Single stories or themes that are told in sequential graphic format (the same manner as a "comic book"), but contained to a single or small total number of volumes.

Mini-comics/Mini-comix - As defined by creator Jessica Abel: "The word "minicomic" does not mean "small comic". The "mini" in mini-comics is a reference to a relatively small print run, and also how much personal labor on the part of the artist and friends is involved.

Mail art zines - Mail art and zine communities are closely aligned. Before the Internet, almost all zines came through the mail, thanks to anti-author/anti-institutional/anti-curatorial creators who sought to distribute/share their work outside of traditional physical exhibition spaces. The foundations of this work are based in sociopolitical art movements (the Situationist International, samizdat) and text/image movements (Fluxus, Dada).

Newsletters - Longtime zine creators will remember *Factsheet Five*, the now-defunct newsletter founded by Mike Gunderloy in the early 1980s that reviewed zines. *Factsheet Five* -was- the Internet for zine creators before the Internet existed! Unfortunately, in 2024, online newsletters have been conflated with the new marketing term "e-zine" which equates new blogging formats with zine creation.

Riot Grrrl zines - Riot Grrrl was a third-wave feminist outgrowth of 1990s American punk subculture where zines became a large part of creating textual communities for women and girls emphasizing the sharing of personal experience as a community-building tool, and zines being the ideal portable, distributable medium for women to connect across the country.

Underground comics - Comics created during the 1960s and 1970s that were shaped by American youth/sociopolitical counterculture.

Vinyl and cassette culture - Analog objects combining audio recordings—vinyl records, microcassette, audiocassette/ j-card, compact discs (CDs), .mp3s, streaming, etc., with printed matter.

Community Challenges: "That's Not Punk!"/ "That's Not Worthy of an Archive!"

Punk archival collections are showing up in academic libraries (as of July 18, 2024, [ArchiveGrid lists 1,553 collections with "punk"](#) in its descriptors).

Are punk primary sources worthy of academic focus and resources?

Members of punk scenes may believe that entrusting materials born of their subculture are better left within the community, even if it means those materials may not survive.

(Davis, *Fill A Void*)

The FLUKE collection ended up at the Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia after the original collection, donated to our town's public library, was discovered to be discarded. It is still unclear what happened to the original collection (due to loss of institutional memory) but what has been surmised is that the accession process was handled by well-intentioned people in the Young Adult section who may have accepted materials in good faith, but were unable to see the entire process through. Because the materials weren't properly accessioned, they were lost or discarded. This was further complicated by the fact that the collection had been donated by Patrick Dean, who died, and would have been the one person who might have been able to tie together any donation stories. This was a simple thing in retrospect, but with grave consequences to this community's materials.

Without question, archival materials related to punk cultural events appeal to LGBTQIA+/queer people, print enthusiasts, scholars of punk and print culture, art students and student affinity groups who can access these materials locally, where avid fans can request items from Special Collections on their own, or when librarians like Kathryn Manis and Stacey Piotrowski bring selected zines to their archival outreach classes. The popularity of and engagement with these collections proves that they are a worthwhile venture of cultural stewardship. (Davis, *Fill A Void*)

Challenges Libraries and Librarians Face in Collecting and Preserving Zines/ Small Press Output

Most librarians aren't trained to recognize the artistic and creative value of zines, for example, evaluating Ed Sanders' *Fuck You: A Magazine of The Arts* with the same criteria as *Dracula* by Barry Moser's Pennyroyal Press: two completely different beasts, one an expression of -original- radical ideas aligned with the sociopolitical movements of the late 1960s, and printed on a mimeograph machine; the other an artist whose books are linked to the -reinterpretation- of extant (often public domain) works in the traditional atelier format of wood engraving, where the author is already well-established as a creator.

These aren't pieces that should be compared directly, and in a world where most archivists who handle materials -generally- practice Greene and Meissner's "More Product, Less Process," the application of MPLP can have disastrous outcomes for zines or other community-based archival collections.

This is where a more holistic and culturally situated approach to archiving practices is necessary, in what Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor have outlined as a "feminist ethics of care" to apply to archival efforts related to vulnerable communities as well as for collections with materials that are sensitive in nature and format, employing radical empathy to acknowledge and honour their connections and affective responsibilities to records creators, subjects, users, donors, and their communities. (Gilmore, Julia, "Be Kind, Rewind," *Archivaria*, pp. 81-82).

Furthermore, libraries almost always face resource constraints in terms of budget and staff dedicated to zine preservation. Zines require careful handling, appropriate storage environments, and even digitization efforts to ensure their accessibility and stability over time. These activities can be resource-intensive, requiring libraries to allocate adequate funding and personnel, and humanities funding is slim.

Selection Criteria: Assessing The Firehose of New Arrivals

- First Amendment freethinkers are here! Amongst many zine collections, there will likely be potentially sensitive or adult content. Access to uncurated and/or unvetted material should be handled with ethical awareness and sensitivity (Golonka-Czajkowska, Monika & Trebunia-Staszal, Stanisława, p. 107)
- Because the zine/underground publishing movement focuses on INCLUSION, collections can look more like an "open mic night" and in most cases, aren't curated to suit the (subjective) strengths that a gifts collector or processing archivist can easily identify.
- "Weaker" zines aren't always edited out, and the "best" items in the collection (to a newcomer) don't stand out upon appraisal.
- There can also be "weak" zines that turn out to have been created by people who become famous (or notorious!) that then become valuable!

Learning To Love Non-Standard Formats and Fragile Materials

Zines don't look "valuable" because they can often resemble disposable things that we see in the mass-media: circulars, religious pamphlets, expired event fliers, etc. –they may even actually be created to be destroyed! Alchemizing the disposable, destroyed, or otherwise unwanted into something aesthetically significant was the hallmark of visual artist Kurt Schwitters in his "merz" series (derived from the German word for commerce, "kommerz") during the World War I era as "hopeful portraits of how bits of advertising, scraps of newspaper, wood, garbage, and urban debris could all be collaged together into something new and beautiful. (MOMA), and of course the phonic name check for the Minutemen's "Project 'Mersh" (a sarcastic commercially-styled recording in lieu of their "we jam econo" production method).



Fig. 4. UCLA Library Special Collections - "The Minutemen, 1982." From left-to-right: Mike Watt, D. Boon, George Hurley. Photograph. CC2.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/127608843@N08/14975778673/>

Where GLAM Terminology Has Failed: Seeking Shorthands (July, 2024)

Tables 1-3 demonstrate how the Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) and the Library of Congress' *Thesaurus of Graphic Materials* (TGM) still haven't caught up with the terminology of zine and comic culture and subcultures. Terms aren't NEARLY as precise/granular as they should be. Actually, *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) appears to be the most up-to-date with the description of types of zine cataloging (made

through the contributions of dedicated zine librarians), though it is still behind on the description of types of zines and comics.

Table 3: *Zine and Comic Terminology in the Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)*

Medium	In AAT?
zines	no
	AAT does include: fanzines photo zines webzines
minicomics	no
comix	no
	AAT does include: adventure story comics comic book artists comic books comics (documents) comic strips graphic novels horror comic superhero comics underground comics webcomics

Table 4: *Zine and Comic Terminology in Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)*

Medium	In LCSH
zines	yes

	<p>LCSH also includes:</p> <p>Cataloging of zines</p> <p>E-zines</p> <p>Libraries—Special collections—Zines</p> <p>Underground periodicals</p>
minicomics	<p>no</p> <p>Uses the blanket term</p> <p>Comic books, strips, etc. (May Subd Geog)</p> <p>UF Comic strips</p> <p> Comics</p> <p> Funnies</p> <p> Manhwa (Comic books)</p> <p> Manhwa (Comic books)</p> <p> Serial picture books</p>
comix	no
	<p>Comic books, strips, etc. (May Subd Geog)</p> <p>UF Comic strips</p> <p> Comics</p> <p> Funnies</p> <p> Manhwa (Comic books)</p> <p> Manhwa (Comic books)</p> <p> Serial picture books</p>
	<p>LCSH does include:</p> <p>horror comic</p> <p>superhero comics</p> <p>underground comics</p> <p>webcomics</p> <p>Punk culture in comics (Not Subd Geog)</p>

	<p>Established September 2022. Here are entered works on the relationship between punk culture and comics.</p> <p>UF Comics and punk culture BT Comic books, strips, etc.</p> <p>Punk culture in comics (Not Subd Geog) Established September 2022.</p> <p>Here are entered works on the representation of punk culture in comics.</p> <p>BT Comic books, strips, etc. Punk culture in literature (Not Subd Geog)</p>
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Table 5: Zine and Comic Terminology in Thesaurus for Graphic Materials (TGM)

Medium	In TGM
zines	yes
	<p>TGM includes:</p> <p>Zines</p> <p>Comic books</p> <p>Comics</p> <p>Fanzines (Not Used for Indexing)</p> <p>Graphic novels</p> <p>Periodicals</p>
minicomics	no
comix	no

As stated previously, these terms were established in the 1980s by zine and comic creators/curators (e.g., Françoise Mouly and Art Spiegelman) at the most professionally-esteemed (establishment) levels--significant cultural omissions that exemplify, again, how "bottom-up" methods of creative expression (non-atelier-style printing, punk zines, and DIY expression) lack the cultural privileges of documentation most "top-down" creatives have.

FLUKE's Creation And Evolution: Why It Works The Way It Does And Why Some Things Haven't Changed

I don't think FLUKE was supposed to last as long as it has, which is why it has the name it does.

Patrick and I never really had any deep discussions with Bak about the "philosophy" behind FLUKE, it was just a thing we had a lot of fun with the first time it happened and we both thought it should continue for a few more years.

Looking back, two decades later, it sort of comes into focus that maybe that is the "philosophy." The only thing we've really ever tried to do with FLUKE is provide a space for all of these people making this sort of art to get together and look at what's going on.

One thing Patrick and I were always serious about was making sure nobody made money off of FLUKE. We charge enough for the exhibitor spaces to cover what we spend renting the actual tables, and we charge enough at the door to cover the cost of using the space.

It's a delicate balance, and we realize that, but neither of us ever wanted to see FLUKE become a source of income for anyone.

This isn't meant as us telling other people how to run other shows. Money is a reality and you have to make sure the financial side is taken care of, but FLUKE has been incredibly lucky to find a way to do what we do at a low cost.

This allows us to focus on the community.

Patrick and I both made/ make comics and 'zines and other stuff, so we're a part of the community in that way, but our larger role with FLUKE is to provide a space, and to try to do that in the most equitable and accessible way possible.

The *only* thing I don't like about FLUKE is how quickly the exhibitor spaces sell out. This is, of course, a good problem to have because it speaks to the overall health of the event itself, and the scene in general, but I really want everyone to have an opportunity to exhibit at FLUKE. The issue is space. It has been suggested that we find a larger venue, but it's not that simple. We love the 40 Watt and we fear that moving away would erode the "character" of what FLUKE is. We also can't move the event out of walking distance from Bizarro-Wuxtry, our main sponsor and a huge reason FLUKE exists in the first place. There are financial considerations involved as well, since any dedicated event space or hotel conference room in or near downtown Athens would likely increase our costs beyond what we're comfortable with.

So, for as long as they'll let us, FLUKE is staying at the 40 Watt.

We've instituted a "lottery style" exhibitor selection process rather than our previous "first come / first served" process which seems to have worked pretty well, but in addition to this, I'd like to see a statewide network of small press shows similar to FLUKE.

--Robert Newsome, FLUKE Festival director and co-founder

Zines as community archives: Community collaboration and partnership ethics

Alongside traditional special collections in libraries, community archives play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. They emphasize archiving as a process rather than just a collection of things, and they consider the symbolic, metaphorical, and discursive aspects of archives. Community archives elevate marginalized voices and perspectives so they can be heard and recognized.

Longtime Athens writer [Mary Jessica Hammes](#), whose work has been in both [Flagpole](#) and *the Athens Banner-Herald* conducted the first slate of interviews with [Steph Rivers](#), [Mayday Trippe](#), and [Melissa McBride](#), to be followed by [Robert Newsome](#), and [Mandy Mastrovita](#).

In partnership with FLUKE founder and organizer Robert Newsome, FLUKE founder and digital projects librarian/archivist Mandy Mastrovita, UGA Special Collections engagement librarian Dr. Kathryn Manis, "official" zine librarian Stacey Piotrowski, Lamar Dodd School of Art librarian Lindsey Reynolds, and College of Environment + Design Owens Library's librarian Lydian Brambila have all attended or organized cross-collaborative zine events at UGA, in Athens, across Georgia, and nationally to network with Georgia's statewide comics/zine communities, and, where possible, to collect new donations for UGA's zine collections.

Attending these events as zine creators as well as librarians and archivists provides members of the community with a sense of security, because (collectively) we can demonstrate that we understand the myriad 'zine subcultures, subgenres and eras, and that this authentic engagement within the community and the nationally-recognized creators that have emerged from this scene is a badge of good stewardship for their materials.

What our 2024 outreach schedule in support of the FLUKE Oral History Archives looked like:

March 29, 2024- FLUKE Pre-Party and Live Comix Reading Friday, March 29, 2024 at Bizarro-Wuxtry, 6-9 pm. Live comix reading event with podcast host [Cam del Rosario](#) (of [@gutterboyspod](#)) and Athens cartoonist [Abby Kacen](#) (aka [Mild Pain](#) and [Keep It Weird](#)), with live readings by:

- [Eleanor Davis](#)
- [Pat Rooks](#)
- [Joey Weiser](#)
- [David Caldwell](#)
- [Victor Alpi](#).

March 30, 2024 - Tabling at FLUKE 2024

June 15, 2024 - Atlanta's [Paper Hearts Zine Fest](#)

June 22, 2024 - [Athens Art Book Fair](#) (held by UGA's Lamar Dodd School of Art in conjunction with [AthFest](#))

August 3-4, 2024 - The [Zine Librarians Unconference](#) at New York University [UPDATE: Kathryn Manis, Robert Newsome, and Mandy Mastrovita were scheduled to speak at this conference, but a summer storm delayed our travel to NYC and we were unable to present. This white paper was developed by Mandy Mastrovita so that we could capture some of the momentum that Dr. Manis' efforts brought FLUKE].

October 18, 2024 - [Women and Girls in Georgia \(WAGG\) conference](#) at UGA

October 21, 2024 - [Savannah's SAVage FST Comics and Zines Festival](#)

Sustainability and Perpetuity: Building Future Activities and Workflows for the FLUKE Mini-Comics & Zine Festival Archive

The University of Georgia's Instruction and community engagement librarian Dr. Kathryn Manis has cultivated successful long-term partnerships with creators such as [Garrett Izumi](#), a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts whose body of art and self-published work includes printmaking, comics, photography and book arts. Izumi recently donated his zine collection of zines, underground comix, fan newsletters, prints, and artist books, mostly representing the U.S. West Coast and parts of the Pacific Northwest. Izumi's work will become part of a zine/comix/comics exhibit Dr. Manis is planning in the Hargrett Library exhibition space in 2026.

Mandy Mastrovita is in a unique position as both a founding member of the FLUKE community in 2002 (and perennial last-minute button-puncher) that the archive is built around and a digital librarian/archivist at the University of Georgia. She has also worked with several community-based archive collections in her position as a metadata librarian, though the FLUKE Festival Archives collection is the first collection she has worked on as a member of the community represented.

This has presented a tremendous opportunity to focus on ways to establish sustainable data entry workflows where all collaborators can work remotely and asynchronously, and to plan events with the community where the community lives and congregates.

In her role as a volunteer for FLUKE (and as a creative practitioner as printmaker, book artist, longtime zine creator, and former associate director of Nexus Press), Mastrovita performs the professional tasks of a metadata librarian and digital archivist on behalf of FLUKE to help immerse herself in the realm of a community archive that she inherently understands, can identify the appropriate datasets, resources, and places where contextual information from the community can be sustainably gathered.

Some of these workflows include:

- Building out FLUKE's exquisite event playlists (curated meticulously by Robert Newsome, [a longtime music reviewer for Bandcamp Daily](#), an online record store and music community that directly supports artists creating new music) by scraping the infernal Apple DRM from an old iPod (where Newsome will record these lists "until the iPod dies") and metadata volunteers (the "FLUKE Metadata Squad") match those playlists with available online sound recordings to recreate the lists.
- Establishing simple workflows to collect data from a broad base of FLUKE contributors (many, if not most of whom are digital natives) ([FLUKE! Community Crowdsourcing Pilot Project](#))
- Crowdsourced metadata projects hosted in Google Sheets ([FLUKE Metadata Squad!](#))
- Planning a [Wikipedia edit-a-thon](#) with FLUKE artists and contributors to populate artist biographies, artist statements, etc.
- Documentation of FLUKE events, pre-parties, after-parties, etc. (photos) for presentation and grant-writing assets.

- [Archived list of FLUKE participants and vendors \(since 2010\)](#)
- Performing reconnaissance work on collections/items/institutional relationships impacted by the loss of FLUKE's beloved co-founder, festival organizer, and prolific comic artist Patrick Dean.
- Planned outreach to members of the Athens/UGA community for donations of any physical materials that came from FLUKE events, which include:
 - Promotional posters/web graphics for FLUKE and FLUKE-related events
 - Original graphic buttons, for exhibitors and attendees, designed by different artists (some of whom have contributed multiple designs), with the production (graphic design, layout, and actual "button-punching" managed by Devlin Thompson and Robert Newsome who collaborated with each contributing artist.
- Planning the curation of an online exhibit (e.g., Omeka): identifying, curating, interpreting, assembling textual, graphic, and time-based content, and assessing rights.
- Planning physical exhibits in alternative spaces in town and at UGA to strengthen our institutional contributions.
- Working with established members of FLUKE and Bizarro-Wuxtry to help determine any content that is brand new, or where a creator has not been identified correctly.
- Traveling to the NYC Zine Unconference (August 2024) to conduct a feasibility report on potentially a.) hosting a zine unconference in Athens, Georgia and b.) determining if it would be advantageous to host it during FLUKE.

*[NOTE: *This ended up not happening in 2024 because of summer storms that prevented us from getting to NYC in time for the conference].*

If we get there...Building A Statewide Zine Coalition.

I'd like to see a statewide network of small press shows similar to FLUKE. SAVage Fest in Savannah is a great example of this. I was at their first event last year (2023) and it was excellent. There's talk of organizing something similar in Atlanta. I think there's enough demand for this type of show in Georgia/the southeast that we could easily support a "one show per season" approach.

–FLUKE co-founder and director Robert Newsome

Conclusion:

The FLUKE Mini-Comics & Zine Festival in Athens, Georgia, has been a powerhouse of countercultural expression through print culture that has centered its community and kept things running like a good all-ages punk show. For more than twenty years, FLUKE's "we jam econo" ethos (originally the Minutemen's) and the collaborative output of the Athens community have fostered new generations of zine creators and independent publishers, contributing to Athens' authentic (if unsung) cultural identity.

We all know that libraries face challenges in acquiring and preserving zines due to their unconventional formats, fragile materials, and limited acquisition channels. And humanities-based collections usually aren't likely to see funding unless a motivated donor steps in--all the more reason we are so thankful for our grant from the University of Georgia's Institute for Women's Studies' WAGG Conference. With this seed money and numerous labors of love, we have been able to begin centering the voices of women and queer people in Athens' punk and creative culture, plan activities and workflows for the

FLUKE Mini-Comics & Zine Festival Archive that build upon this foundation in ways that give back to FLUKE's community, ensuring sustainability and perpetuity.

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